NUMB. XXII.

The Prompter.

To be Continued TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS.

If it ſhall pleaſe you to open *theſe* Letters, *They ſhall ſeem to* SIGNIFY.

SHAKESP. Merch. of Venice.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24. 1735.

BY the unexpected Increaſe of my Correſpondence, I begin to conceive myſelf in the ſame Situation with my worthy Fellow Labourer for *Improving the Publick Taſte*, the Renown'd Knight of the Sable Countenance, near the *Italian Walk* in the *Hay-market*, — we have, neither of us, any more to do, than juſt *furniſh Convenience* for the *Willing*. — The Good People, of Either Sex, as faſt as they are inclin'd to be *Doing*, are ſo obliging, that they crowd in upon us, and contrive Every Thing, themſelves, *for their own Entertainment*; without *our* farther Concurrence. — Take ſome *Proofs*, in the following Letters.

To the Prompter *of* Great Britain.

Brother Patriot,

" IT is my *Way* to begin bluntly; for I am by " Nature a Rough Dealer, who, in Reward " of my *Virtues* have been *baniſh'd* out of my " Country. — But, there are *Ladies* yet living, who " had formerly good Reaſon to *remember* me, un- " der the Name I was then known by, of WHIP- " PING TOM; And happy had it been, for Them, " and their Families, if I had continued among " them to this Day, in the Exerciſe of ſo uſeful an " Office. — I can aſſure you, without Vanity, that " a Thouſand *Female Enormities* wou'd then have " ſhrunk in their Heads, which have been em- " bolden'd to *flouriſh*, by my Abſence. — Nor " need I appeal to a more manifeſt Proof, of the " Misfortune the *Nation* has ſuffer'd, from a Want " of my Preſence, and *Genius*, than is now at this " Inſtant *ariſen* in the REAR of the ever-changing " *Sex*; where, without Fear or Shame, it *perks* " *unſufferably upward*, even from that very Part, " which was kept in *Decorum*, by my Diſcipline; " forming indeed the very *Throne*, of my Juriſ- " diction.

" BUT, like other Reformers, of too glaring " *Merit*, I was malign'd, and cut ſhort, in my " Youth: For, *Queen Anne* aſcending the Throne, " miſ-conceiv'd it an Indignity to Her Sex, that " *Ours* ſhou'd have Right to proceed, in that *ſum-* " *mary* manner: So, the Rod of Reformation " giving Way to the Rod of Authority, The *Ladies* " were aſſign'd over to the Caſtigation of *Ladies*, " and in a little Time *loſt* Every *Impreſſion* — while " their exil'd Benefactor has, for Thirty Years toge- " ther, been *improving his Skill*, to the Advantage " of *foreign* Nations.

" AS I was exerting my Talent, in *Germany*, " and, there, after two Years hard Toil, and almoſt " inceſſant Operation, had well nigh enamell'd the " bluſhful Timidity of one of Queen *Elizabeth's* " Maids of Honour, upon Half a Score inviolable " Virgins, of the High *Reliſh Rampant*, It came " accidentally to my Ear, that *You* had taken upon " you, at *London*, an Office, that wou'd, naturally, " open a Likelyhood, for the Reſtoration of my " own: Whereupon I left my Work unfiniſh'd, " and am come over abruptly, to offer you the " Aſſiſtance of an able and *experienc'd Arm*, in " Subordination to your Purpoſes.

" IF you encourage me to expect Employ- " ment, under Influence of your Recommendation, " I ſhall be contented to *work cheap*: For, having " taken a private View of the Town ſince my " Arrival, I find ſo hopeful a Proſpect, as to the " *Numbers* who may want my Help, that the moſt " moderate Rates in the World will abundantly " recompence the Labours, of

Your, and the Publick's,

Faithful Servant,

WHIPPING TOM.

To that very odd Creature, The Prompter.

Moſt venerable among Broomſticks!

" MAY the ugliеſt of all Witches ride away " with thee, in the next High Wind, if my " Queſtion is not anſwer'd, in the very firſt *Promp-* " *ter*.

" THAT Forward Romp, Miſs *Jenny Toſs-pack* " and I have been quarrelling theſe two Hours, " about *Coat* Cards, as the ſilly Creature pretends " they ſhou'd be call'd, or *Court* Cards, as I, and " Every Perſon of Good Senſe, to be ſure, calls " them.

" NOW you muſt know, ſhe has no Body on " *her* Side, but the Parſon; and *He*, (poor *Dull-* " *enough!*) likes her, becauſe ſhe has a Way of " *ſtaring* with her *Eyes*, as if forſooth they were " *Fine ones*. — I found out the Intrigue, by his " miſtaking *my* Foot for *Hers*, one Day, under the " Card Table. — But, as I was telling you, ſhe " wou'd have 'em to be *Coat* Cards; and I ſuppoſe, " it was, becauſe they had Coats on: — Or, may " be, ſhe ſaid it in Complaiſance to Her *Parſon*: " But, Lord help her, ſhe *forgot* that the ACE is a " NAKED *Pip*: and yet *He* is reckon'd as one of " the Four. — *Ace*, *King*, *Queen*, and *Knave*, you " know, make up the Number.

" Now,

" Now, says I, I say, but what Every Body must " say, that knows any Thing at all of the Matter, " They are *not* COAT *Cards*, but COURT *Cards*. " — For, is there not a *King*, and a *Queen*, " among them ? If this is not a Proof, the *Duce* " is in it, *Madam*, said I. — Ay, and, Madam, says " *She*, with a Look all a' Fire, like the Eyes of a " Cat, There is a KNAVE, too, in their *Company*; " and I don't know, but People of *your factious* " *Dispostion*, may be for Having HIM also pass for " a COURTIER !

" LORD, answered I, turning my Head o' one " Side, and spoke it as it were, to the Rest of the " Company, *How* SILLY *some People can be!* — " AS IF *Any Mortal Soul made a* DOUBT *of it!*

" AND, then, to it we went: — But the only " Difficulty on *my* Side, was, that I found it as " hard to prove the ACE a *Court* Card, as she had " done to make a *Coat* Card of him. — Good " Lord ! What a foolish Thing it is to put one's " Self into a *Passion!* For, then, to be sure, one " never hits upon the least *Wit* in a *Reply*; or *says*, " or *thinks*, any thing, to the *Purpose !* — But, " may I never be believed more, if I had left her " above Half an Hour, before it popt into my " Head, when I did not *want* it, That the Word " *Ace* might be *wrong Spelt*, — For, only take " away C, and put in its Room a Couple of *S S*, " (Letters you know of directly the same *Sound*) " and you, or any Man of Experience, will see it, " as clear as the Sun, that an ACE, may be a " *Court*, Card, and not seem at all to be out of " his Element.

" NOW, was I in the *Right*, or *not* ? — I am " sure I *was* tho', beforehand, — But I wou'd have " you *tell* me, however. — Only Besure don't say " any Thing to make That Pert Thing *vain*, — " And, of all Love, remember for the future, to " spell *Ace* with two *S S*, if you are desirous of " obliging

Your Constant Reader,

Barbara Shuffle-smooth.

To the Author of the Prompter.

Inner-Temple, Jan. 17, 1734.

SIR,

" IF *Homer* has laid himself open to Ridicule, " by the *Meanness* of some of his *Comparisons*, " Our Writers of *Tragedy* have been guilty of the " same Kind of Fault, in admitting Scenes, of too " *ludicrous* a Nature. — *Shakespeare* is every where " stuffed with *Punns* and *Quibbles*. In one Place " your Compassion is excited towards a Monarch, " deploring the Evil Courses of his Heir; and, in " their Consequence, the foreseen Misery of his " Kingdom. — In the next Scene, you shall split " your Sides, at the *Jokes* of *Sir John Falstaff:* " a Wight, of such incorrigible Gayety, that he " cannot forbear cracking *Jests*, in *Soliloquy*; and " even amidst the Hurry and Slaughter of a *Battle*; " where a Man of much greater Courage would " have found himself in no such *merry* Disposition.

" In a Word, nothing, which has a Tendency " to produce *Laughter*, shou'd be allowed to have " Place in a *Tragedy*.

" For this Reason, I have been greatly offended " at the ridiculous *Dresses*, in which our inferior " Sons of the Buskin generally make their Appear- " ance. — I have frequently seen a Duke, in a Coat " half a Yard too long for him; and a Lord High- " Chamberlain, that had *shed* most of his Buttons. " — I have seen Men of proud Hearts submitting, " unnaturally, to strut in *tarnish'd Lace*; And there " is a Certain *Knight* of the *Garter*, who conde- " scends to tye back his Wig, with a *Packthread*. " — When a King of *England* has honour'd the " Stage, with his whole *Court*, in full Splendor, " about him, I'd have undertaken to purchase the " Cloaths of all his *Nobility*, for the Value of Five " Pounds. — It exceeds (as my Brother Satirist has " it) all *Power of Face* to be serious, at the Sight " of so much *Shabbiness* and *Majesty!*

" The Reason of This, I am inform'd, is that " the Habits do not become *Perquisites* of *Earls* " and *Barons*, till they have been worn out, by " the *Emperors* of the Theatre: but, whether This " is always the Case, or, whether Those Noble Per- " sonages are not sometimes obliged to travel to- " ward *Monmouth-street* for their Equipment, I will " not take upon me to determine.

" The Bounds of *Probability*, in the mean Time, " may be as openly transgress'd, in the *Appearance* " of an Actor, as in the *Sentiments* which he utters. " — And the *Dress* therefore shou'd always be *suited* " to the Person who takes it upon him. — An *old* " *Roman* cou'd never, with any *Propriety*, be made " look like a *Modern Frenchman*; nor a *Dutch* " *Burgo-master's Wife*, like a Queen of *Great Bri-* " *tain*. When, therefore, Persons of Rank and " Figure are introduc'd upon the Stage, they shou'd " be *cloath'd* so as to *represent Themselves*, and not " the Patch-work Inconsistencies of their *Manage-* " *ment*.

" They will say, in their Excuse, that some of " these Actor's own Cloaths, are as *shabby*, as those " they wear on the Theatre; no Matter for That. " —Let us, for Humour's Sake, imagine a *Painter*, " Imitating the Example of these *Brentford Princes* " of our Theatres, and drawing *Pictures*, for the " Great Men, of this Nation. — Let us suppose him " to have painted the Duke of *R——d*, with an im- " measureable Length of *Perriwig*, whose every " *Hair* was as *uncrooked*, as his *Purposes:* — Sir " *R——*, *W——*, with his *Pockets* at the very " *Bottom* of his *Flaps*; as if He were in Prospect " of having no Occasion to *Reach* them, — And " the Lord *C——r*, without a *Shirt*, as if the *Can-* " *dour* of his *Soul* were to have been express'd, by " the *Nakedness* of his *Picture:* — wou'd not every " one discern the Indecency of such *unseasonable* " Fancies, and condemn that Fault in the Painter, " tho' His Strokes shou'd be ever so *natural* ?

" I am sensible, it wou'd be more *Expensive*, to " cloath Every Actor with *Propriety:* — so it " would, to qualify *Managers* with *Judgment*. " Yet, Both the One, and the Other, are what the " Publick have a Right to expect, or to *hiss* out " their *Half Crown*, when they meet with a Dis- " appointment. — I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

Jeff'ry Cat-Call.

P. S. " If you encourage my Correspondence, " I can contribute no *small Assistance*, for the " Entertainment of your Readers. — I have, in " particular, by great Study and Application, dis- " cover'd a Secret how to multiply one *Hiss* into " Five Hundred. — I will *let you* into this Con- " trivance in another Letter; and, that you may " have Opportunity to see *Proof* made, of its Ef- " fect, I shall, by *your* Help, give a Day or two's " *Notice*, from Time to Time, to my *Brother* " *Templers*, upon what Occasions It may be, pro- " per, to *try* the *Extent* of this Invention.

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